

WINNING THE ELECTRIC VEHICLE MARKET 2020-2021

Myths demystified



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KEY FINDINGS

1

1

High e-mobility interest growth rates in 2018-2019 offer Electric Vehicles (EV) makers great opportunities for growth in 2020-2021.



Compared to competitors, Tesla generates the highest consumer interest with its EV models. All EV makers can profit from tracking their brand evolution over time versus competitors, allowing them to make informed decisions to increase their share of consumer interest.

3

Consumer sentiment on e-mobility is improving, particulary in regard to traditional barriers such as range and charging time. Keeping track of changing consumer barriers enables EV makers to devise more effective content strategies.



Instead of "greenwashing" a brand, EV offerings in fact increase its consumer perception as innovative and premium. Analysing the impact of EVs on brand values helps EV makers to improve their brand and product positioning.



Connectivity features and e-mobility go hand in hand in the consumers' eyes, with both topic areas having a high correlation in online discussions. Determining which connectivity features drive a brand's success and that of their competition can help EV makers to gain a decisive edge.



Range is not necessarily the key decision making feature for consumers, as other topics have a higher emotional impact. In view of lower-range models, EV makers can profit from moving from a feature- to an emotional benefits-based content strategy.



Following COVID-19, interest in EV in some regions has actually increased. For EV makers, it is therefore crucial to leverage regional opportunities via targeted marketing.

2 PURPOSE

The rapid growth of the global electric vehicle (EV) market has been facilitated by **shifting consumer perceptions around e-mobility**. This reflects the general trend towards environmental responsibility in the industrial societies. Today, consumers see the ideal car as not only affordable, comfortable and reliable, but also eco-friendly and connected. Those players who were among the first to respond to these shifts are now the most successful in the global EV market.

When it comes to gauging and acting upon the consumer perceptions of e-mobility, however, many of the decisions made in the automotive industry are still guided by assumptions due to a lack of available information.

This is a consequence of the reliance on traditional market research methods such as surveys, which alone are not adequate **in today's fast-moving and connected world**. Surveys cannot account for unforeseen phenomena such as the COVID-19 and they reflect the average consumer, rather then individual target groups. They also do not allow for tracking the effects company decisions have on consumers in real-time. As a result, **persistent myths and gut feelings fill in the gaps surveys leave behind.**

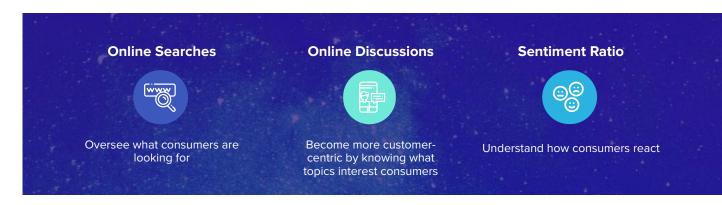
The purpose of this white paper is to showcase a better way to measure and understand consumer behavior to business, marketing, brand, and sales decision-makers within the automotive industry: advanced search and buzz data analytics. This white paper will use TD Reply's advanced analytics approach to separate facts from common myths on e-mobility and show decision-makers a path towards winning the EV market.

3

TD Reply was founded 1999 by leading consumer behaviour researchers Prof. Dr. Volker Trommsdorff and Prof. Dr. Marc Drüner at the Technical University of Berlin. Ever since, we have been approaching our work with scientific discovery in mind. Our goal is to help **understand consumer behaviour** by continuously unearthing new behavioural patterns in the digital sphere.

The core assumption underlying our services and products is that boundaries between the digital and the real world have blurred. Online actions do not stay within the boundaries of the digital world, but reverberate offline in one way oranotherand vice versa. We refer to the digital world acting as a extension to the real world as the "Digital Soundbox." In contrast to most offline actions, online actions have the unique advantage of being measurable.

For instance, consumers today first use the internet to research product and brands online before making a purchase decision. This leaves footprints in form of **search data**, which can be analysed to understand the overall **consumer interest** in a brand or product. Consumer interest has proven to be a **reliable predictor of car sales.** Moreover, on social media and other platforms, consumers exchange information about products with other consumers, known as **buzz data**. It is possible to derive information on consumer perceptions of the brands or cars, identify what the most relevant topics for them are, and much more from buzz data.



Utilizing this data through advanced analytics enables decision-makers in the automotive industry to:

- · Become customer-centric by knowing what is important for customers
- Find out how consumers perceive their brand and vehicles
- · Register and react to trends early
- · Discover main brand drivers
- Benchmark their marketing campaigns vis-à-vis the competition
- · Steer brand perception in real-time
- Track and accurately measure their marketing ROI
- Assess potential new markets around the globe up to city-level
- · ... and more



GROWTH OF CONSUMER INTEREST IN EVs

In 2018-2019, consumer interest in EV in China, Germany and the U.S. grew significantly. China and the U.S. are the two largest automotive markets in the world. Germany is the largest automotive market in Europe. For EV makers, these markets offer immense opportunities for growth in 2020-2021.

Chinese online searches for EVs through Baidu even almost tripled, as Figure 1 shows. Germany follows with more than a doubling of Google searches.

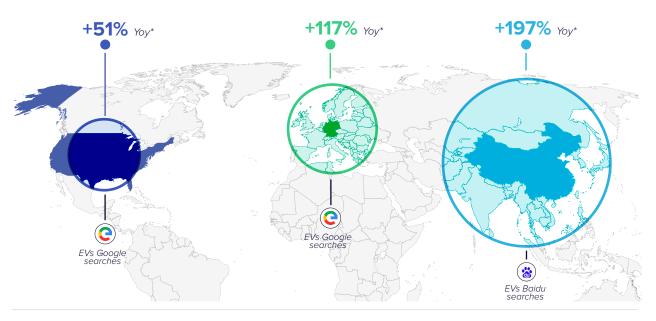
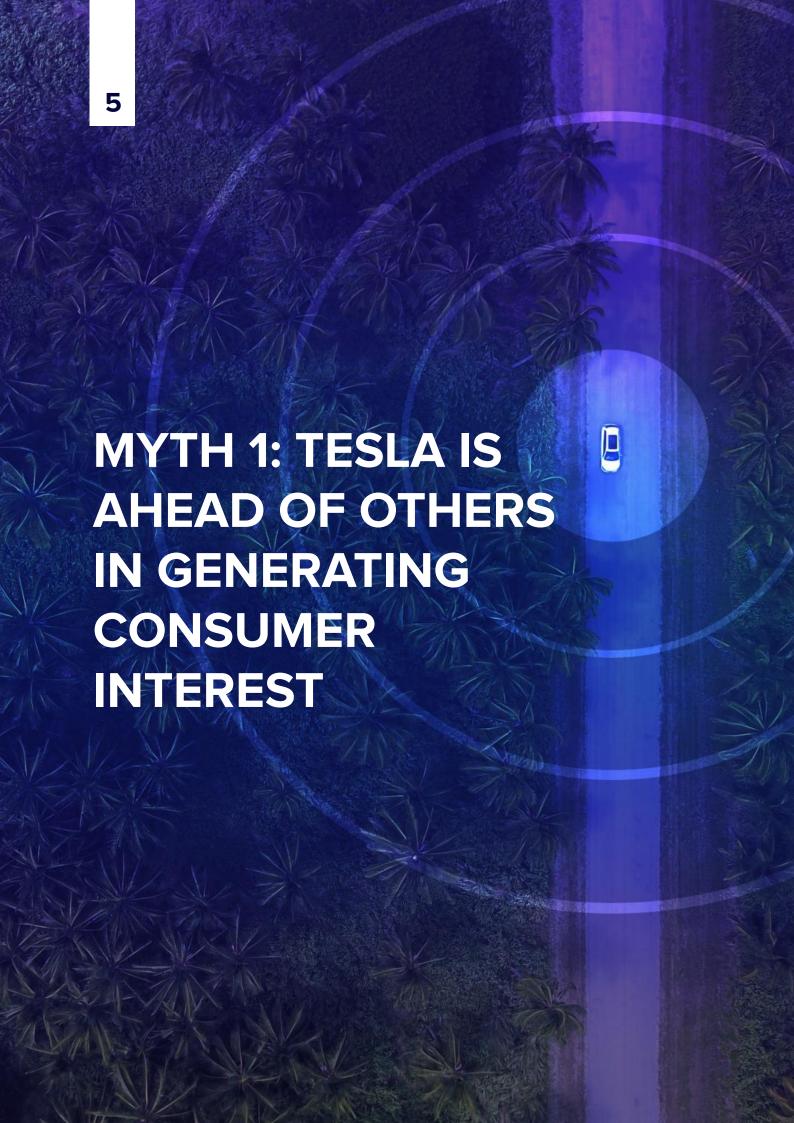


Figure 1: Growth of Google (U.S. and Germany) and Baidu (China) searches related to electric vehicles in 2019 as compared to 2018.

Increasing consumer interest in EVs is also reflected by the volume growth of global mass media mentions related to e-mobility, shown in Figure 2. E-mobility, though already firmly established as a consumer trend seven years ago, continues to grow in high increments today.



Figure 2: Growth of mentions related to e-mobility in mass media over the last seven years. Source: SONAR Trend Radar.



MYTH 1: TESLA IS AHEAD OF OTH-ERS IN GENERATING CONSUMER INTEREST

Which EV models generate the highest consumer Interest?

Ever since unveiling its first production model in 2012, Tesla has successfully generated consumer interest by presenting disruptive technology and also through a **disruptive**, **customer-centered marketing strategy**. The introduction of the more affordable Model 3 cemented its status as "The Apple of the Car Industry." Similar to Apple, Tesla managed to build a customer and supporter base that is not only loyal, but emotionally attached to the brand.

Figure 3 shows that consumers in China, Germany and the U.S. are most interested in Tesla's EV offerings, far ahead of the competition.

Share of Google & Baidu searches

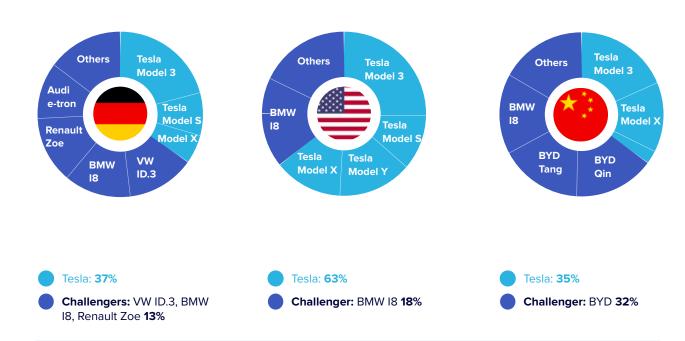


Figure 3: October 2019 to March 2020. Google Searches based on a set of 15 international EV models. Baidu Searches based on 11 available tracked EVs

Tesla is the **only EV maker that has three of its models** among the 15 most searched EV models in France, Germany, Italy, Spain, and the United Kingdom. The Model 3 is at the top of the ranking, boasting almost double the amount of searches compared to the second most searched EV model, the BMW i8.

WHICH MODELS GENERATE THE HIGHEST CONSUMER INTEREST?

EU5 Ranking	Model	Absolute Google searches June 2019 - May 2020
#1	Tesla Model 3	7.052.300
#2	BMW i8	3.740.500
#3	Porsche Taycan	3.512.500
#4	Tesla Model S	2.659.100
#5	Audi e-tron	2.546.300
#6	Renault Zoe	2.497.800
#7	Tesla Model X	2.441.200
#8	VW ID3	1.912.810
#9	BMW i3	1.846.000
#10	Nissan Leaf	1.718.300
#11	Tesla Model Y	1.248.100
#12	Jaguar I-pace	1.074.700
#13	Mercedes EQB	1.038.100
#14	Mercedes EQC	1.038.100
#15	Honda e	913.500

Figure 4: Top 15 of 47 popular BHEV and BEV models ranked by absolute Google searches from the five biggest European markets: France, Germany, Italy, Spain, and the United Kingdom. Period: June 2019–May 2020.

Myth 1:

Tesla is ahead of others when it comes to generating consumer interest.



Tesla dominates the share of interest across all markets.



What you should do

Track the evolution of your own brand vs. competitors over time to make informed decisions.

WINNING THE MARKET THROUGH COMPETITOR TRACKING

Search data reflects consumers' interest in a product or brand in an unadulterated way. It is proven to be a strong predictor of a products' sales success in its respective category.

Owing to its real-time character, search data mirrors the effect of currentevents on consumer interest. Therefore, search data perfectly complements traditional market research, which can often be out of date with the latest trends and developments.

It can be leveraged by automotive manufacturers to monitor, visualise and analyse their own brand searches with competitors via a real-time dashboard. This enables decision-makers to track the evolution of their brand vis-à-vis competitors, allowing for more informed strategic decisions.

Making use of the Digital Soundbox, competitor tracking can also be conducted based on geography, down to continent, country, province, or even city level, yielding more useful insights.

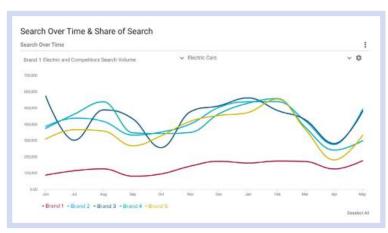


Figure 5: Competitor search tracking in the Pulse dashboard.

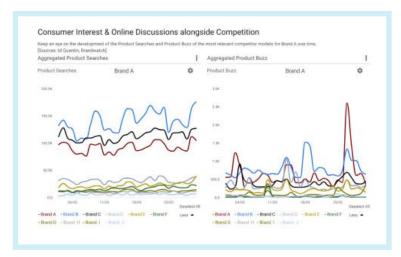


Figure 6: Competitor search and buzz tracking side-by-side in the Pulse dashboard.

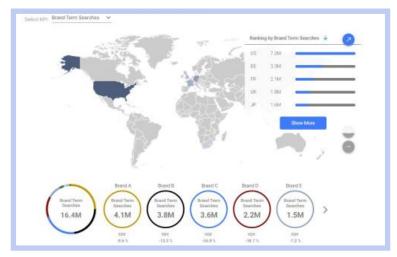


Figure 7: Tracking own and competitor consumer interest across global markets in the Pulse dashboard.



MYTH 2: BARRIERS TO E-MOBILITY ARE STILL STRONG

What is the state of the barriers to E-Mobility?

Range, affordability, charging infrastructure, and ecological issues are typically seen among the most pressing barriers to mass adoption of e-mobility from the consumer side.

Our Year-Over-Year sentiment analysis of online discussions related to e-mobility, however, suggests that the **barriers are becoming increasingly obsolete.**

As Figure 7 shows, sentiment of German and American consumers towards traditional barriers has significantly improved in 2020 versus 2019. The increase has been particularly notable for discussions surrounding battery recycling, charging time and energy costs – issues that concern charging infrastructure and ecology.

YOY development of sentiment* towards selected barriers

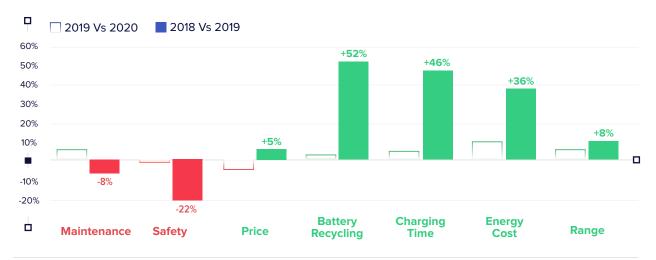


Figure 8: Source: Brandwatch – Jan 2018 to March 2020, buzz based on a set of 15 international EV models. *Sentiment ratio: share of positive mentions within the emotional mentions which are either positive or negative.

Table 1 also shows that almost **all of the top 15 EV models are fully-electric battery electric vehicles (BEV)**, not plug-in hybrid electric vehicles (PHEV), which are less affected by the e-mobility barriers. There is only one exception: BMW's i8, which is a PHEV. This suggests that the consumers' acceptance of e-mobility is growing at a much faster pace than many in the industry predicted a few years ago.

Myth 2:

Barriers to e-mobility are still strong.



Consumer sentiment towards e-mobility barriers is improving.



What you should do

Gain better understanding of relevant barriers to steer content strategy.

WINNING THE MARKET BY STEERING CONTENT STRATEGY

It is essential for EV makers to understand consumer barriers and track these overtime in order to create a better content strategy, which maximizes the success of brand and product positioning.

TD Reply's advanced analytics solutions accurately track consumer barriers on a daily basis. The perception-per-topic dashboard module makes use of buzz data, sentiment data as well as custom algorithms to showcase trending topics bybuzz volume alongside their respective sentiment ratios for any desired time period (Figure 9). The topic selection varies on the use case and is conducted withthe support of TD Reply's experienced automotive consultants.

TD Reply's content radar helps to understand and track consumer barriers from a consumer interest perspective. The module sorts the topics that are relevant for a particular business use case by search volume (Figure 10). With the help of the content radar, content editors are always informed about relevant consumer topics, opening up new avenues to optimize their content strategy.

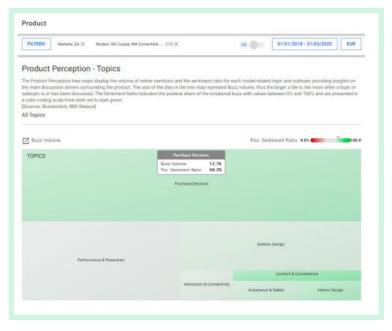


Figure 9: Perception per topic module in the Pulse dashboard, allowing to identify the buzz volume and sentiment ratio per online discussion topic.



Figure 10: The content radar module in the Pulse dashboard, displaying a dynamically changing map of selected topics sorted by current consumer interest.



MYTH 3: E-MOBILITY JUST GREENWASHES THE BRAND

How do EVs drive the brand perception?

A common industry myth is that the introduction of EV models makes a brand more "green" in the eyes of the consumers. Some automotive decision-makers have been wary of this effect, as leading environmental organizations have linked the introduction new EV models with "greenwashing" in the past. As shown earlier, however, consumer acceptance for e-mobility has significantly increased in the last years.

A look at the aggregated perception of brands compared with the perception of their EV models through the Digital Brand Equity approach not only help **brands be perceived as more green, but also as more innovative and premium.** As total brand perception combines perception of each specific model, the introduction of a model that is perceived as innovative and premium also leads to an increased perception of the overall brand as innovative and premium.

Digital Brand Equity: Selected brands VS selected EVs

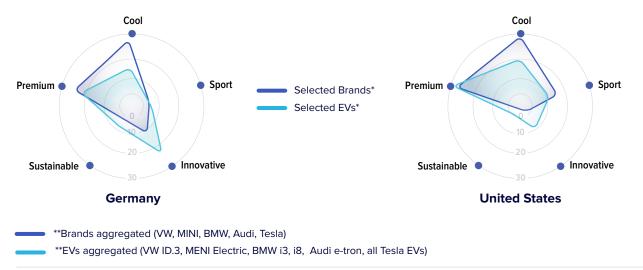


Figure 11: Perception of brands compared to models with the Digital Brand Equity approach. Source: Brandwatch – Jan 2019 to March 2020.

Myth 3:

E-mobility just greenwashes the brand.



EVs also help brands to be perceived as more innovative and premium.



What you should do

Determine the impact of your EVs on your brand values to sharpen brand and product positioning.

WINNING THE MARKET THROUGH DIGITAL BRAND EQUITY TRACKING

Having a strong brand has never been more important than today, when automotive manufacturers have more markets to conquer than ever. Yet common brand measurement methods struggle to consistently link strategic brand positioning with marketing activities.

This is where the Digital
Brand Equity approach comes
into play, constituted by two
components: assessing the
impact of marketing activities
on brand image and equity,
and tracking brand strength to
uncover the most important
brand image drivers. At the
center of this approach is buzz
and sentiment data, offering
real-time measurement of brand
consumer perception.

As a result, automotive decision-makers can quantify and benchmark their brand strength against competitors, and understand which activities and products really drive their brand. This enables real-time brand steering.





Figure 12: The Brand Perception Wheel and Brand Image Explorer modules in the Pulse dashboard.



MYTH 4: CONNECTIVITY PAVES THE WAY FOR E-MOBILITY

How important are connectivity features for consumers?

The EVs of today are associated with a relatively recent feature: connectivity. Connectivity enables self-drivingand other innovations found in modern EVs. It is the **defining characteristic of modern EVs.**

This is reflected in online discussions by consumers, with a **high correlation between e-mobility and connectivity topics**, suggesting it is one of the main success drivers for EVs. Among the connectivity topics, **self-driving is discussed most often**, **followed by driving assistance and Apple CarPlay**.

Online Discussions

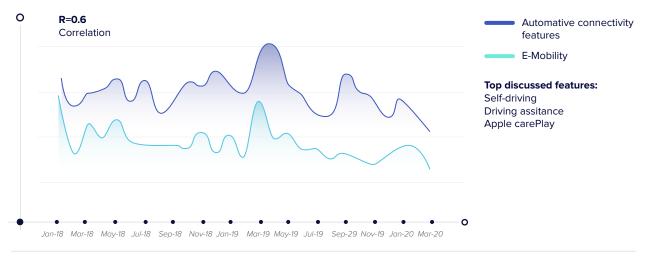


Figure 13: Correlation between e-mobility and connectivity features in American online discussions. Source: Brandwatch U.S. buzz data. Jan 2017 to March 2020.

Myth 4:

Connectivity paves the way to e-mobility.



There is high interdependency between connectivity and EVs.



What you should do

Find out which connectivity features drive your EV success versus the competition.

WINNING THE MARKET THROUGH CUSTOMER-CENTRIC INNOVATION

The success of Tesla exemplifies the **paramount role of customer-centric innovation in paving the way to long-term leadership.** Tesla leads the world in both consumer interest and market capitalization. In contrast to other car makers, Tesla **recognized the importance of connectivity for consumers early on.** They focused on developing a connectivity architecture that enables online updates from home, continuously bringing new features and improving the performance of the vehicles. Most of Tesla's competitors are now heavily investing into connectivity research, aiming to introduce the same features for their vehicles – after all, successful innovation becomes a customer expectation in a very short time-frame. Tesla's headstart, however, is proving difficult to catch up with.

TD Reply has conducted global market scouting and trend research projects for leading players in the automotive industry. We can **help EV makers foster customer-centric innovation** that will set them apart from the competition.

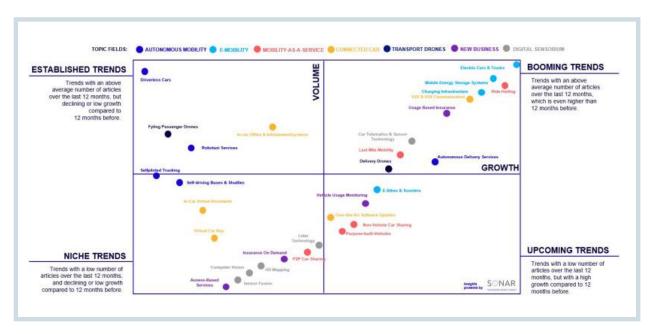


Figure 14: Created with the help of our data-driven trend research platform SONAR, the above image displays a trend hype cycle for trends related to e-mobility and connectivity.

By combining data-driven trend research tools such as SONAR with established trend analysis methods and expert interviews, our consultants identify key trends, model business impact, develop future scenarios, and create business and technology roadmaps.



MYTH 5: RANGE IS THE KEY TO CONVINCE CONSUMERS

How important really is range for consumers?

Running out of battery power on the road with no charging station in sight consumers online frequently cite as the main reason for deciding in favor of PHEV and traditional combustion engine vehicles. Unsurprisingly, range anxiety is commonly thought of as the **biggest barrier to the mass adoption of BEVs.**

A closer look at online sentiment towards range, however, reveals that while range is the most discussed topic, it is not the topic that drives emotions for potential buyers of EVs. **Speed, interior and exterior design are the principle emotional decision-drivers**, while range is the most significant among rational decision drivers. Studies suggest both emotional and rational drivers have a similar importance in most car purchase decisions.

Online Discussions and sentiments per topic and brand

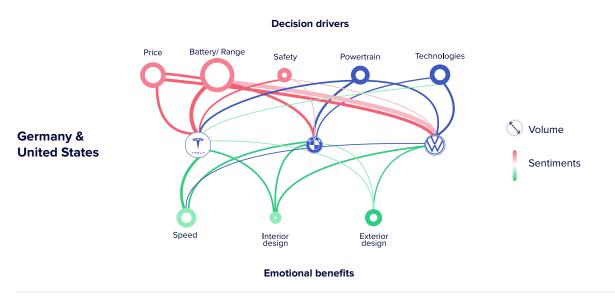


Figure 15: Correlation between e-mobility and connectivity features in American online discussions. Source: Brandwatch U.S. buzz data, Jan 2017 to March 2020.

Myth 5:

Range is the key to convince consumers.



Range is the most discussed topic, while other topics excite customers more.



What you should do

Optimize your content strategy to move from a feature-based to an emotional benefits-based communication.

14

WINNING THE MARKET BY TRACKING DECISION DRIVERS

An effective content strategy succeeds to translate the brand identity into relevant consumer content and also fuels purchase decisions. Optimizing a content strategy in such a way is impossible without first understanding what really drives purchases and brand image. Common approaches to track decision-drivers such as surveys fail to take into account and quantify current sentiment, and cannot establish a consistent time series to shed light on the evolution of drivers over time. These gaps can be addressed with the help of advanced data analytics.

By analyzing, clustering and refining search and buzz data, the key product decision drivers can be identified and ranked by importance. This allows comparisons for how well a brand performs in respect to key drivers versus competitors, identifying strengths and weaknesses to tackle via the content strategy. For instance, if a brand scores exceptionally high on technology in the eyes of the consumer, but weaker on design versus the competition, content strategy should be steered to prioritize technology-related topics.

Apart from offering guidance on content topics, this also provides justification for product development units to strengthen comparatively weak decision drivers, in order to gain a competitive edge in the long term.

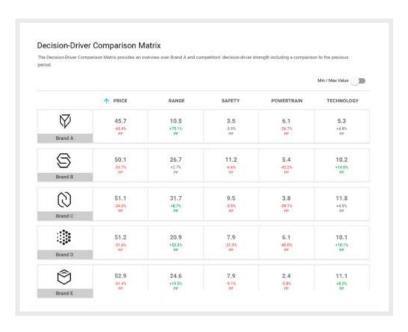
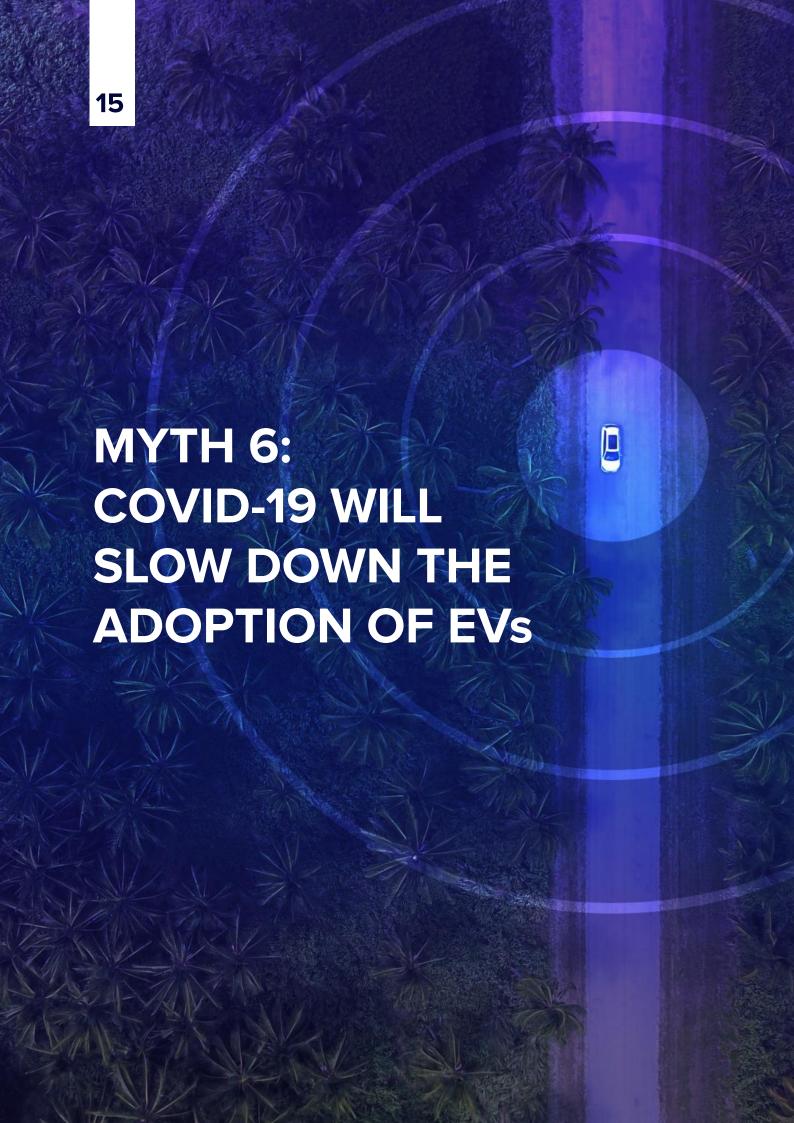


Figure 16: The Decision-Driver Comparison Matrix module in the Pulse dashboard provides a quick overview over which decison drivers perform well or below expectations vis-à-vis the competition, also over time.



Figure 17: Brand perception drivers can be tracked in the above module, which enables decision-makers to know exactly which characteristics consumers ascribe to a brand, which should ideally be in line wit hthe desired brand personality, providing further incentives to steer content



MYTH 6: COVID-19 WILL SLOW DOWN THE ADOPTION OF EVS

To what extent is COVID-19 a hurdle for EVs?

The automotive industry has been one of the hardest-hit by the COVID-19 pandemic. A TD Reply study found that the **consumer interest in cars decreased by 18 percent overall** in the first months of 2020 compared to 2019 in the EU5 states and the U.S.

Search volume for EVs, post- and pre-COVID-19

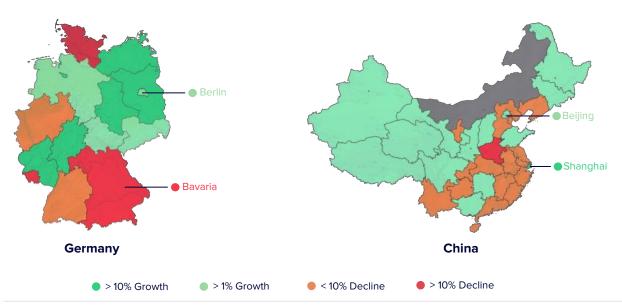


Figure 18: Sources: GER Google Trends Index, weekly average Feb 2020 vs. Mar 2020, CN Baidu Search Index weekly sum Nov 2019 vs. Apr 2020.

Our analysis also suggests that **interest in EVs actually increasedin some regions around the world in wake of the COVID-19 crisis.** Among those regions are the German states Berlin and Brandenburg and the Chinese municipality of Shanghai (Figure 15). Experts cite a number of possible explanations: COVID-19 is a catalyst for digital transformation, shifting consumer preferences and newfound interest for private cars, or a higher awareness for urban air quality following the lockdowns.

Myth 6:

COVID-19 will slow down the adoption of EVs.



In some regions, interest for EVs went up following COVID-19.



What you should do

Targeted marketing to leverage regional opportunities.

WINNING BY TARGETING REGIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

From country to region to city, opportunities can vary greatly for the automotive industry. Owing to many years of experience of working with leading automotive brands, we developed several approaches and tools tailored to steer marketing activities effectively at a geographical level.

A location-based drill down of campaign performances displaying real-time data enables decision-makers to identify the best regional growth opportunities at a glance. By tracking competitors in relevant areas around the globe, brands can act in an proactive and informed manner to secure strategic advantages over regional challengers.



Figure 19: The Province Contribution view in the Pulse dashboard, showing search volume growth for a brand per province in a selected country.

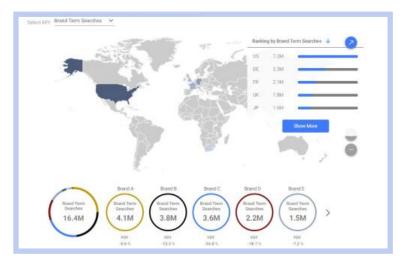


Figure 20: Tracking own and competitor consumer interest across global markets in the Pulse dashboard



WORLD'S BIGGEST EV MARKET: WINNING CHINA

Success in the Chinese market is essential for any brand looking to improve or safeguard its position in the world's top 20 EV manufacturers. This task is likely to become more difficult in the future, especially for those brands that are lagging behind in the Chinese market. In the last five years, Chinese brands significantly increased their share of total consumer interest vis-à-vis non-Chinese brands (Figure 21).

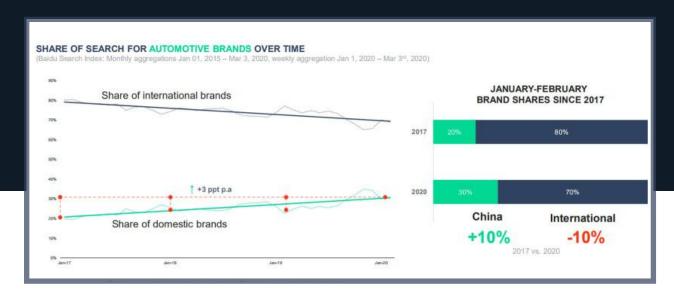


Figure 21: Over a three-year period, Chinese brands gained 10 percent more share of consumer interest vis-à-vis Chinese brands.

A noteworthy development was observed in February 2020: In Guangdong, China's most populous and wealthy province, the Chinese brand Jetour managed to enter the top 5 f automotive brands according to consumer interest (Figure 22). This is unusual, as Guangdong's consumers have been typically more interested in non-Chinese brands.

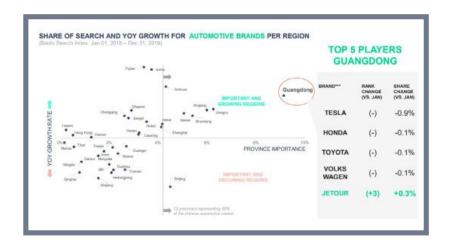


Figure 22: In the beginning of 2020, Jetour managed to enter the top 5 of automotive brands ranked by consumer interest in Guangdong, China's most important province for the automotive industry.

WORLD'S BIGGEST EV MARKET: WINNING CHINA

The **strong digital experience** that Jetour offered consumers in the wake of COVID-19 **heavily contributed to this success.** On February 27, 2020, Jetour introduced its new X95 model in a live broadcast on all major Chinese streaming platforms. This broadcast featured a virtual "dismantling" of the new model – a move that was regarded as risky by industry experts as it exposed the quality of the parts used. It, however, clearly struck a chord with the quarantined audience.

Its leading digital experience positioning also helped Tesla to secure the top position in the top 5. In March 2020, Tesla's Model 3 sales hit a record high in China – at a time when sales of virtually all competitors significantly declined. Instrumental in this success was Tesla's heavily broadcasted launch of the Shanghai Gigafactory, which significantly lowered the cost of Tesla vehicles for Chinese consumers, as well as the introduction of **contactless home car deliveries.**

Tesla's and Jetour's success during the COVID-19 crisis highlights why it is crucial for automotive brands to be able to respond quickly and adequately to shifts in Chinese market trends and consumer preferences. Yet gaining access to Chinese consumer interest, buzz, and market trend data proves to be a major challenge for Western companies. This is why TD Reply developed China Beats, a consumer intelligence platform specifically devised for Western companies to gain a thorough understanding of the current Chinese consumer and market trends.

China Beats unites in itself TD Reply's 10-year experience of operating in China and helping Western brands win in the Chinese market. It uses all relevant Chinese eCommerce, news, search, social media and other platforms as data sources for advanced social **listening**. By leveraging **Natural Language Processing** (NLP) and translation algorithms, it allows business to listen to the Chinese internet both with English- and Chinese-language queries. The social listening view is as easy to use as a search engine (Figure 23), without sacrificing in-depth insights into topics of interest.

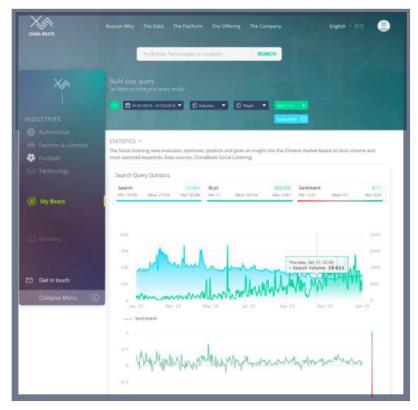


Figure 23: The social listening view in China Beats is as easy to use as a search engine, while the complex algorithms under the hood scrape a wide variety of relevant Chinese platforms for valuable social listening information.

WORLD'S BIGGEST EV MARKET: WINNING CHINA

China Beats features an automotive industry view, which provides an overviewof the most important data relevant to the automotive industry. This includes search data, buzz data, sentiment data, a ranking of trending topics and top brands (Figures 24-26). Moreover, China Beats identifies top Key Opinion Leader's for the automotive industry in China. Users can build their own China intelligence deck that fits their individual use cases ideally and import it into existing dashboards, including Pulse. Winning China has never been easier.



Figure 24: The social listening view in China Beats is as easy to use as a search engine, while the complex algorithms under the hood scrape a wide variety of relevant Chinese platforms for valuable social listening

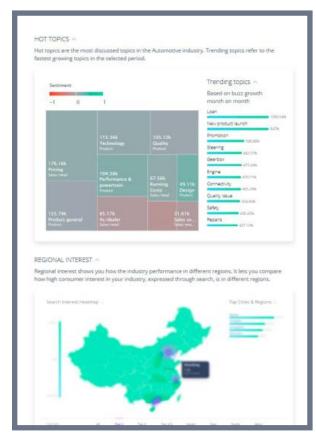


Figure 25: The Hot Topics module in China Beats allows for a quick overview over trending topics, offering also possibilities for deep-dive exploration.



Figure 26: China Beats' Player Landscape module provides an overview over the top automotive players based on both search and buzz, as well as their respective sentiment ratios.

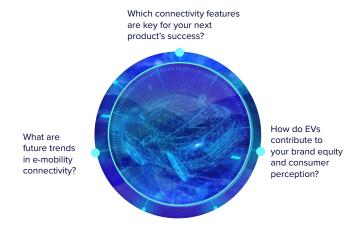


WHAT MANUFACTURERS CAN DO TO LEVERAGE THE GROWTH OF EVs

Use the digital soundbox to your advantage and ...

gain better understanding of your consumers to

ANSWER YOUR BUSINESS QUESTIONS



track your competitors in real-time to

GAIN A COMPETITIVE EDGE



identify brand and product success drivers to

KNOW EXACTLY WHAT CHANNELS AND CONTENT TO INVEST IN



TOOLS

We develop a growing number of innovative advanced analytics tools that also act as our principle data sources.
Tools that were used in the creation of this white paper:
China Beats (Baidu search data), SONAR (trend data), Pulse (buzz data) and Quentin (Google search data).



A consumer intelligence platform specifically developed to make the Chinese consumer and market understandable for Western companies by tracking and analyzing data from the most relevant Chinese eCommerce, news, search, social media, and other platforms.



A highly flexible, low time-to-market business dashboard builder that can incorporate existing dashboards and boasts a rich set of unique predefined modules such as a Digital Brand Equity and the Virtual Marketing Assistant.



The only fully data-driven and search engine-independent trend research platform that automatically scrapes over 60 million scientific and mass media articles as well as patent registers in response to individual queries.



The first working approach to quantify and benchmark the creative impact of campaigns by using a combination of AI, buzz analysis and advanced marketing theory.



TD Reply's search volume analysis tool enabling the daily tracking of organic search volume per country and single keyword level. Used in most of our search data analyses.

20 CONTACT

Contributors

Researchers: Elodie Song, Margot Vieux

Editor: Leo Zalischiker

Design: Leticia Puerta Mascaro, Khaled Mebarki



Lars-Alexander Mayer

Partner

+49 177 2678149 la.mayer@reply.de



Dr. Philipp Dauderstädt

Associate Partner

+49 170 7677047 p.dauderstaedt@reply.de

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